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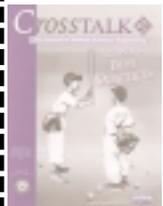
June 1999



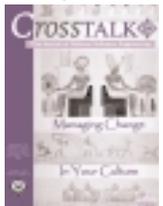
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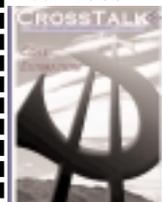
Jan 2000



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Time to Stuff the Tower, I Mean, Turkey

It is almost that time of year—the time when we express our thanks for all the comparisons between turkeys and computers.

Speedy processing of the birds allows our nation to feed its annual tryptophan addiction. Speedy processors (plus ample RAM) allow our nation to fuel its addiction to software (among other things).

Everybody loves lunch meat, unless home cooking is consistently available. The same can be said of commercial off-the-shelf software. Now if we could just find the equivalent of leftover turkey sandwiches in software—hand-picked and custom-built.

If you do not cook the turkey long enough, salmonella is a danger. If you do not scan your network well enough, viruses may appear. A good antivirus program is like an accurate pop-out thermometer (in other words, an oxymoron).

If the bird is not raised properly, it may contain parasites, as poorly developed software may contain bugs. Free range turkeys, like open systems, are gaining in popularity; nonetheless, they will never overtake Butterball and Microsoft, respectively.

Grandma's secret stuffing recipe may seem like proprietary systems. Do not remove the giblets until you defrag the hard drive.

Vegetarians at Thanksgiving are like those annoying, younger tech support people who think they know more than you do. Neither turkey wire nor a clever password can keep them away.

The carver of the turkey is like the network administrator, but there is always some guy who grabs a turkey leg and walks into the other room with it as if it were a palm pilot.

Then there are the guys sitting in the front room not doing any work. All they do is sit there and watch football, dreaming of the six-legged turkey. They may as well be surfing the Net or playing Minesweeper (or that cool 3-D pinball that comes with Windows 2000. A friend of mine likes to play it ...) on company time.

Isn't it interesting that as integral as football has become with Thanksgiving, that the NFL only serves up two choices Dallas (Wintel) and Detroit (Apple). Somebody has his thumb on the lazy susan.

Whoever is in charge of leftovers is akin to a configuration manager—there is only so much that will fit into the refrigerator, and it must be labeled properly.

Were the Zip disk and Ziploc disposable tupperware invented simultaneously? That hardly seems like a coincidence. It must be some sort of conspiracy fueled by the product-line approach and factory farming.

When you sit down in front of the platter or platform, what whets your appetite? Is it white meat? Are you a GUI (graphical user interface) kind of guy? Or is it dark meat? Are you a chode (Gen X slang for *nerd*) for code? [I realize I am rapidly running out of comparisons here, as I intend to run out of room in my stomach on Thanksgiving. I intend to continue eating past that point, however.]

Despite the meat of the matter, most of us consumers and users are like turkeys with their heads cut off. We are won over by bells and whistles. A Thanksgiving spread no matter how impressive it is, would not be the same without those little extras: cranberries and gravy. And the pie is not bad either, even if it is a pumpkin-reuse project left over from Halloween.

Folks, pity the poor turkeys, who must feel like some of those pre-IPO dot-coms right before they go public.

Thanksgiving holds the record for the fastest forgotten holiday. It is a race to see if the last piece of pie will get past your palate before the Christmas decorations and music break out. Thanksgiving memories last about as long as that dot-com you saw in that non sequitur commercial at halftime or the pre-eminence of your *leading edge* processor speed.

Matt Welker and Gary Petersen, Shim Enterprise Inc.